

REMARKS

Claims 2-7, 9-14, and 16-23 were previously pending in this patent application. Claims 6-7, 13-14, and 16-23 stand rejected. Claims 2-5 and 9-12 are objected to. Herein, Claims 2, 9, 16-20, and 23 have been canceled. Claims 3-5, 10-12, and 21-22 have been amended. New claims 24-27 have been added. Support for the claim amendments may be found in, but is not limited to, Figures 1-4 and pages 4-14 of the specification. Accordingly, after this Amendment and Response, Claims 3-7, 10-14, 21-22, and 24-27 remain pending in this patent application. Further examination and reconsideration in view of the claims, remarks, and arguments set forth below is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) Rejections

Claims 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuki et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,168,566 (hereafter Kuki), in view of Shi et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,757,897 (hereafter Shi).

At page 7 of the Office Action, it was stated that Dependent Claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Although Applicant disagrees with these rejections, Independent Claim 21 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Dependent Claim 2, which depended from Independent Claim 21

and which has been canceled. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Independent Claim 21 is patentable and is in condition for allowance.

At page 7 of the Office Action, it was stated that Dependent Claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Although Applicant disagrees with these rejections, Independent Claim 22 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Dependent Claim 9, which depended from Independent Claim 22 and which has been canceled. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Independent Claim 22 is patentable and is in condition for allowance.

Claims 6-7, 13-14, 16-20, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuki et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,168,566 (hereafter Kuki), in view of Shi et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,757,897 (hereafter Shi), further in view of Abgrall, U.S. Patent No. 6,401,202 (hereafter Abgrall). Since Claims 16-20 and 23 have been canceled, the rejection of Claims 16-20 and 23 is moot.

Dependent Claims 6-7 and 13-14 are patentable because they depend from one of Independent Claims 21 and 22, which are patentable as discussed above.

Objected Claims

At page 7 of the Office Action, it was stated that Dependent Claims 2-5 and 9-12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 2 and 9 have been canceled.

Dependent Claims 3-5 and 10-12 are patentable because they depend from one of Independent Claims 21 and 22, which are patentable as discussed above.

New Claims 24-27

At page 7 of the Office Action, it was stated that Dependent Claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Independent Claim 24 includes the claim limitations of Dependent Claim 2. Claims 25-27 depend from Independent Claim 24. It is respectfully submitted Claims 24-27 are patentable.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that the above claims, arguments and remarks overcome all rejections and objections. All remaining claims (Claims 3-7, 10-14, 21-22, and 24-27) are neither anticipated nor obvious in view of the cited references. For at least the above-presented reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all remaining claims (Claims 3-7, 10-14, 21-22, and 24-27) are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is urged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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